

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 5:20 p.m. from Room 459 in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Paul Helmke of Fort Wayne, IN, conference president, Mayor Deedee Corradini of Salt Lake City, UT, conference vice president, and J. Thomas Cochran, executive director, U.S. Conference of Mayors; Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver, CO; Mayor Jerry E. Abramson of Louisville, KY; and David Osborne, president, Public Strategies Group, Inc. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on Internal Revenue Service Reform Legislation

June 19, 1998

I am very pleased that our efforts to reform the IRS took a major step forward today with a bipartisan agreement reconciling the House and Senate legislation. I have worked very hard to give the American people an IRS that is fairer and more responsive to their needs. Enactment of this compromise reform will build on our initiative to give Americans a modern, customer-friendly IRS.

Our new IRS Commissioner, Charles Rossotti, has brought forceful leadership and the best management techniques from the private sector to the agency. This bipartisan compromise will give him the tools he needs to succeed, while expanding taxpayer rights. It will allow the IRS to bring in talent and expertise from the private sector, strengthen the Taxpayer Advocate's office, and expand the convenient and popular practice of filing tax returns electronically and over the phone. We are pleased that Congress incorporated the Commissioner's sweeping reorganization of the IRS along customer service lines and addressed our concerns about earlier versions of this reform by correcting provisions that would have inadvertently allowed non-compliant taxpayers to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. The Congress also made sure that the Treasury Secretary and the IRS Commissioner will serve on the board overseeing the IRS.

Under the leadership of the Vice President and Secretary Rubin, we have made great strides in our efforts to revamp customer service at the IRS. We have expanded phone and office hours, created popular new prob-

lem-solving days, and launched independent citizen advocacy panels. We cannot solve every problem at the IRS at once, but we are committed to correcting problems when they arise, and this bill will help us do that. I urge Congress to send me this compromise legislation quickly, but to make sure that it is fully and properly funded.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on Signing the Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act

June 19, 1998

I was very pleased to sign today S. 1244, the Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act. This bill protects the religious and charitable contributions made by people who later declare bankruptcy.

As Americans, we value the important role religious and charitable institutions play in the daily life of this Nation. Indeed, we know that fiscal responsibility for these institutions is fundamental to their efforts to meet the spiritual, social and other concerns of our Nation. It is a great loss to all of our citizens for creditors to recoup their losses in bankruptcy cases from donations made in good faith by our citizens to their churches and charitable institutions.

As Americans we also know that giving, whether to one's church, temple, mosque, or other house of worship or to any charitable organization, fosters and enriches our sense of community. We need to encourage, not discourage, that sense of community. The Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act does just that.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue. S. 1244, approved June 19, was assigned Public Law No. 105-183.

Statement on Handgun Control Legislation

June 19, 1998

The Justice Department's report on background checks is further proof that the Brady